stories columned and arcaded, and bears marks of a close adherence to Italian models. No. 50, by S. C. Fripp, has an entrance, in some respects a good idea, and otherwise displays fancy, but is spoilt by a circular projection upon the angle, the object of which might be supposed, did not the plan raise a doubt. No. 52, by Mr. H. Duesbury, is mainly remarkable for its extremely lofty windows, with balconies from the second floor above them. The design seems to have been carefully considered, and is superior to many. Messrs. Dickson and Brackspear, of Manchester (No. 56), stand alone in the position of their entrance, which they have placed at the north corner in St. James's-square, and by which their plan has many advantages; but the entrance is not sufficiently conspicuous. The general design consists of two arcades and orders, the entablatures being broken, and vases surmounting the pedestals of the balustrades, with longer terminations at the angles. The design, though highly meritorious, would, perhaps, be more suitable for a museum or picture-gallery. Mr. G. Alexander (57) has shewn three stories, columned and arcaded. The library and staircase are the parts which best please us. No. 59 has a plan with the entrance at the corner, forming a circular vestibule, from which a hall extends diagonally, and has some good features, without much loss of space. Mr. G. G. Scott's design is, as might be supposed, in the Gothic style, and is worthy of great praise. His plan is perhaps improved, by his not feeling it compulsory to adopt a central position for the doorway. The building has a lofty roof with dormer windows, a large oriel of two stories projecting from the north-east corner, and a pinnacled turret (from the *Palais de Justice*, at Rouen), corbelled out at the south-east corner. This forms an adjunct to the library on the first floor. In many parts of the interior, perfect knowledge of the style chosen and much artistic skill are displayed. The Messrs. Papworth (No. 69), though they, perhaps, hardly express the purpose of the building, shew in the plan, without much loss of space, considerable artistic skill in the arrangement of recesses, and other features of effect, for which we fear very inadequate justice would be done by a non-professional tribunal. The design has large venetian windows grouped together, and much enriched. So large a surface of glass is shewn on the Pall Mall front, that the piers of division would have to be of iron, in order to support the mass of stone above; and we question whether the effect would not have been better avoided. Nevertheless, the design has great merit. The cornice has Victories as cantilevers.—The exhibition is of such extent, that we have had to omit noticing several designs. Amongst those to which names are not attached, is said to be one by Count D'Orsay, hitherto not known as an architect, though in many other walks of art.

In making this general review, we have not pretended to point out which designs are really best entitled to the premiums, or even to mark the relative merit of the various plans. To do this correctly, would require a much longer and more systematic examination than was consistent with our other duties.

The result, however, to which we arrive with certainty is this, that by not calling in professional assistance, the committee, perhaps unintentionally, have acted unjustly towards the competitors, and, moreover, have involved themselves in a dilemma from which we venture to prophecy, they will find some difficulty in extricating themselves.

Queen's Drive, Edinburgh.—The carriage way round Arthur Seat and Salisbury Crags is now on the eve of completion. The lowest part has been open for a considerable time, and an easy access now exists along this drive between the Old Town and the Portobello-road. The higher portion, to Samson's Ribs, is in most places quite finished. The road here, although seemingly a terrace above a deep abyss, is now as safe as any portion of the drive, a parapet wall, from twenty to thirty feet high on the outside, inclosing this part. Immediately above Sampson's Riba the road is all excavated, and the completing link formed between it and the crescent round Salisbury Crags.

DECORATIONS AT SIR ROBERT PEEL'S.

From the attention given in The Builder, to the subject of interior decoration,* it will be understood, that we examined with some interest the decorations of the rooms and staircase at Sir Robert Peel's house, on the occasion previously mentioned. The staircase consists of a simple flight of steps to the principal floor, and the walls are painted in encaustic colours. The work was executed by Messrs. Collman and Davis. The upper half is decorated in compartments, the principal panel painted on each wall having an allegorical figure, illustrating one of the seasons, in the centre. These figures are in neutral colours upon a dark ground. Arabesque scroll-work is painted in colour at the foot of each panel, and small subjects are introduced at the edges, exhibiting some pleasing and fanciful designs. The whole ceiling is divided into compartments, filled in with squares of ground glass; and a more liberal use of positive colour is here indulged in, with great propriety, and beauty—the red lines upon the glass itself being particularly happy in effect. The frieze beneath the ceiling, is enriched with a scroll in relief—white upon a dull red ground. The gilded brass-work of the railing is arranged in curves of elegant design. We might have preferred the four allegorical subjects in actual relief, but the combination of colours, and the general design in this staircase seem to us worthy of great praise, and shewed an acquaintance with principles, which we have before inquired into, such as we are not in the habit of meeting with. The decorations in the principal rooms above stairs, are almost confined to the ceilings, the walls being nearly covered with pictures. Gilded mouldings, and ornaments relieved by red grounds, serve to unite the ceilings with the walls, the general ground work being of light hue. The cornice has been judiciously treated, some of the ornaments are relieved by green, according with the olive tint of the walls.—On the ground floor, the dining-room has been well treated. There is little actual relief, except in the ceiling, yet the treatment of colour and form has been very successful. Crimson, or purple, predominating in the carpet, and dark colour in the furniture, the walls are made lighter in tone. The ornament is arranged in panels, painted to resemble oak, the divisions being like pollard oak; and a pattern in dark brown colour is also introduced. The result of the imitation is perfectly successful. We have before argued, that "not the mere *fact* of the imitation, but rather, only the want of success, is matter for regret, according to the particular intention, and that imitations of materials are perfectly admissible, provided they are so good, as to awaken no sense of inferiority to their originals."† This, which we presumed to give as a fundamental axiom, could hardly have been better observed than in the case under notice; whilst in other points necessary to be recollected by the designer, equal judgment has been displayed. Gilding on the mouldings prevents any dissonance between the walls and ceiling, whilst the dark colour of the ornamental pattern promotes the same union with the floor and furniture. The same kind of treatment, observed in the walls, is carried on to the doors. In the ceiling, colour is more freely introduced, but still without interfering with the object just noted. The gilding is relieved by red; the ground-work is partly light pink, and partly dove-colour.—This apartment looks out on to the garden, next the river, the windows opening on to a balustraded terrace, with vases on pedestals.

The collection consists, as is well known, of unrivalled works by the Dutch masters, some by Rubens, and includes a few by artists of later date. On the walls of the room first entered, were some magnificent drawings, chiefly by Rubens. In the library, were disposed a number of choice proofs of engravings, and in the dining room were a few pictures by Reynolds, and Wilkie's well-known work of "John Knox preaching." The works by Reynolds, are particularly interesting, and include a portrait of himself, of Dr. Johnson, one of George IV. when Prince of Wales, and that known as "Robinetta." The rooms upstairs, are filled with fine works by Rubens, Cuyp, Wouvermans, Hobbima, Vander Velde, Gerard Douw, De Hooghe, and others. "The Triumph of Silenus," and the "Chapeau de Paille," by Rubens, are amongst his finest works, the latter indeed being called his "*chef-d'œuvre*." At the end of one room, were portraits by Winterhalter, one of Prince Albert, and the other of the Queen and the Prince of Wales. Although perhaps, an involuntary comparison with the works of Reynolds was unfavourable to the merits of these portraits, we cannot say, that they would bear comparison with the works of some living English artists we could name.—In a smaller room adjoining, were two pictures by Reynolds, and portraits of two of the daughters of Sir Robert Peel, by Sir Thos. Lawrence and E. Landseer.

Altogether, throughout the house, we marked the perception of the delights and the graces of art, not usually found, even with the opportunity of extravagant costliness. We can only regret, that the very circumstances, which made the association of individuals of kindred tastes so gratifying to all present, prevented the detailed examination of the treasures that the right honourable baronet possesses, which they so fully deserve.

* Vide Vol. IV. pp. 14, 109, 182, also, "The Objects and Resources of Art in Interior Decoration," page 82, and "Imitation and Artifice in Form and Materials," page 87, ante.

† Page 87, ante, and also elsewhere.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

Election of Officers.

The annual general meeting of the Institute was held on Monday evening last, to receive the report of the council on the state of the property and affairs of the Institute, and to elect officers for the ensuing year. Mr. Tite, V.P., was in the chair.

The report shewed that the finances were in a very satisfactory condition. Relative to Mr. Weale's proposal to publish annually a volume illustrative of the works of the members, which appeared in our pages some time ago, the council stated, that, as the plan required them to guarantee a supply of matter for the volume by the members, which they had not power to compel, it was necessarily declined.

The chairman alluded to the difficulty with which becoming papers for the evening were obtained by the secretaries, and called on the members to afford them that assistance which they ought to expect.

Thanks having been voted to the various officers of the past year *seriatim*, the members proceeded to ballot for council, and the following gentlemen were elected:—*President*, Earl de Grey; *Vice-presidents*, Messrs. S. Angel, A. Poynter, and C. Fowler; *other members of council*, Messrs. G. Alexander, H. Ashton, C. Barry, D. Brandon, R. D. Chantrell, T. L. Donaldson, J. B. Gardiner, E. I'Anson, G. Pownall, and John Woolley; *hon. secs.*, Messrs. Bailey and Scoles; *foreign sec.*, Mr. Donaldson.

It was stated that the president was about to issue cards for his annual conversazione to the members.

Railway Stations.—The alterations at Rugby station are to be immediately commenced, by the erection of 300 cottages. A crescent of offices is to be erected with divisions for the different companies to occupy them, and who are to have their warehouses, sheds, &c. built behind the offices. Six lines will converge at this point in 1849, when the new offices are expected to be completed.——The Midland Company are to build a new passenger station, at Derby, north of Derwent, with approaches that may have considerable influence on the future arrangement of the streets and traffic of the town. The precise locality, however, has not yet been fixed.——Active preparations are in progress for the erection of the Blackburn station of the Bolton line, which is to be on a large scale; length 252 ft. breadth 40 ft. The four lines of rail in front of the platform (330 feet in length) will be covered by an iron roof in one span. The buildings will be of the Italian Palazzo style, with entrance and carriage way under a lofty covered portico, and numerous approaches. —The Darwen station will be a gothic structure with ample accommodation.

Competition at Bury.—A competitor for the designs for workshops, &c. at Bury, wishes to know whether any of our correspondents can give information as to the result.

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